

Saharan Africa and Implementation of the African Growth and Opportunity Act.”

The White House,
May 19, 2005.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Remarks at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast May 20, 2005

Thank you for that warm reception, especially for a Methodist. *[Laughter]* It's an honor to be here at the second annual National Catholic Prayer Breakfast. This is a new tradition, yet its promises are timeless for Catholic Americans, to thank the Lord for the blessing of freedom, to renew our shared dedication to this great Republic, and to pray that America uses the gift of freedom to build a culture of life.

I am sorry that Laura is not here. You probably think she's preparing a couple of new one-liners. *[Laughter]* But in fact, she's winging her way to Jordan and Egypt and Israel to spread the freedom agenda. But I know if she were here, she would join me in thanking you and millions of others whom we'll never get to say thanks to in person for the countless prayers. It's an amazing experience to be the President of a nation where strangers from all religions pray for me and Laura. And I will tell you, it gives me such peace of mind and enables me to do my job much better when I'm lifted up in prayer. Thank you for your prayers.

I want to thank Leonard Leo for his kind introduction. I want to thank Joe Cella, the president of the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast. I want to thank His Eminence Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. What a fine man; what a beacon of hope. His Eminence shines brightly in the Nation's Capital.

I appreciate Archbishop Chaput of Denver. Thank you for being here, sir. I apologize to him for not being able to listen to his address. He said, “We're paying you a lot of money. Get back to work.” *[Laugh-*

ter] Fortunately, he didn't say, “We're paying you too much money. Get back to work.” *[Laughter]*

I appreciate Archbishop Gomez from the great State of Texas. Sister, thank you very much. Admiral, thank you very much, sir.

Carl Anderson, the Supreme—Knights of Columbus, is with us today. Carl, thank you for your friendship.

The Catholic contribution to American freedom goes back to the founding of our country. In 1790, a newly inaugurated George Washington, the first George W.—*[laughter]*—addressed a letter to all Catholics in America. He assured them that “your fellow citizens will not forget the patriotic part which you took in the accomplishment of their revolution.” I'm honored to stand before you to offer my gratitude for the work American Catholic sons and daughters are doing for our Nation. This work includes the incredible acts of compassion through our faith-based institutions that help Americans in need, especially the Catholic schools that educate millions of our fellow citizens and deliver hope to inner-city children of all faiths.

This morning we first thank God for the shared blessings of American liberty. Catholics have always known that a society built on respect for the religious beliefs of others would be a land where they could achieve and prosper.

When the French writer de Tocqueville visited these shores back in the 1830s, he noted that the most democratic country in the world was also the one where the Catholic religion was making the most progress. He called Catholics the most